



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COCHRAN, KARNES REELECTED TO LEAD STATE MHMRSAS BOARD

RICHMOND – Members of the State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (MHMRSAS) Board voted unanimously last week to reelect Victoria Huber Cochran of Blacksburg as Chairman and Daniel Karnes of Roanoke as Vice-Chairman of the board.

First appointed to the State MHMRSAS Board on July 1, 2004, Victoria Cochran is a nationally-recognized leader in mental health and criminal justice interface issues. She previously served in the Pulaski Office of the Public Defender for nearly two decades. Under her leadership, a coalition of consumers, law enforcement and mental health providers united to develop and implement Virginia's first Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program. Cochran continues to work with communities throughout the Commonwealth to replicate this model.

Cochran also serves as a member of the Virginia Commission on Mental Health Law Reform and as a founding member on the Board of the CIT National Organization. Cochran joined the Department of Criminal Justice at Radford University in 2004 as an adjunct faculty member.

Daniel Karnes is a retired Army Lt. Colonel and a licensed clinical social worker. He recently retired from directing the Roanoke Vet Center where he assisted military veterans with a variety of services ranging from getting benefits to coping with post-traumatic stress disorder. Since his first position at the VA Hospital in 1979, Karnes has served on the board at Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare and at the Virginia Veterans Care Center, including a term as chairman.

Karnes is a mediation volunteer, and a site visitor for the Council on Social Work Education. He is also a commissioner of the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority. Karnes was first appointed to the State MHMRSAS Board on July 1, 2004.

The State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board is a policy-making body comprised of nine citizens from across the Commonwealth. The Board has the statutory authority for the establishment of policy for the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, for the state-run mental health hospitals and mental retardation training centers, and for Virginia's 40 community services boards. Members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly. For more information on the State MHMRSAS Board, please visit: <http://www.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov/adm-StateBoardDefault.htm>.

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Virginia's public mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services system is comprised of 40 community services boards (CSBs) and 16 state facilities. DMHMRSAS seeks to promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for individuals with intellectual or behavioral disorders.